

Revised ADA regulations imminent

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recently approved revised regulations on Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which include new ADA standards for accessible design.

The rules have not appeared in the Federal Register yet, but are expected soon. The regulations will take effect six months after publication, but compliance with the new standards is not required until 18 months after publication.

See ADA REGS page 7



Photo by Lloyd Wolf / Courtesy of Arlington County Fire Department

Motorcyclists from the Iron and Steel Team of public safety personnel escort steel pieces from the World Trade Center that were being delivered to the Arlington County, Va. Fire Department in recognition of the role it played on 9/11 at the Pentagon attack site. The presentation ceremony was held Aug. 29. Read more about the event in News from the Nation's Counties, page 10.

Counties move to ban synthetic 'Spice' dope

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Weed, by any other name, is just as illegal.

Counties nationwide are scrambling to ban incense coated with synthetic marijuana that circumvents regulatory processes and winds up on store counters and in the lungs of consumers.

The incense, which goes by the street names Spice (and variations on that name), K2, Pep, Zohai, Yucatan Fire and Genie has met with statewide bans in eight states and similar intended legislation in several others. Counties in Indiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Maryland, Idaho, New York and Utah have either banned or proposed legislation to ban its sale. U.S. military installations have also banned its use on their grounds.

Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee have banned it. Michigan, New Jersey,

See SPICE BAN page 7

QuickTakes

Great County Fairs

- Tillamook County, Ore.
- Chautauqua County, N.Y.
- Clay County, Iowa
- Vernon County, Wisc.
- Berkshire County, Mass.
- Johnson County, Wyo.
- Merced County, Calif.
- Fayette County, Ind.

Source: USA Today, Aug. 2010

New law extends medicaid support for six months

By PAUL BEDDOE
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently wrote to all state and territorial governors urging them to formally request the additional six months of enhanced federal Medicaid match — known as FMAP — available under the Education, Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act (P.L. 111-226) signed into law on Aug. 10.

The new law extends the increased FMAP under Section 5001 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through June 30, 2011. States will receive a 3.2 percentage point increase in their FMAP from January to March 2011, and a half percentage point increase from April to June 2011. States with high unemployment rates will receive additional FMAP

increases for each quarter during this period. The total is expected to be just over \$16 billion.

As a condition of receiving the additional FMAP, Congress stipulated that the state governors must request the funds by Sept. 24. Some governors, particularly Republicans, have been critical of federal stimulus spending, and the new requirement seems aimed at neutralizing those criticisms.

Subsequently, on Aug. 18, Cindy Mann, director of the Center for Medicaid, CHIP and Survey and Certification (CMCS) at HHS issued a guidance memo to state Medicaid directors making clear that the Medicaid restrictions in ARRA would continue with the extended FMA. These include maintenance of effort with regard to eligibility methodologies, standards and procedures, and that no amounts attributable (directly or indirectly) to the increased FMAP

are deposited or credited to any state reserve or rainy day fund. And, importantly for counties, states that require counties to contribute to the non-federal share of Medicaid cannot be required to contribute a greater share than they contributed on Sept. 30, 2008. Voluntary contributions to draw down additional federal funds are not counted as required under this section.

“Federal FMAP assistance has given a critical boost to local economic activity in counties across the country and has helped to maintain the local health care safety net during the worst months of the recession,” said Liz Kniss, chair of NACO’s Health Steering Committee and a Santa Clara County, Calif. supervisor. “We thank Congress for making six months more support available and join Secretary Sebelius in urging governors to take it up.”



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Fire destroys 10,000 voting machines in Harris County, Texas » Page 2

Whitley seeks NACO members to tell the county story » Page 3

Libraries put new spin on old service » Page 8

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Fire destroys Harris County, Texas voting machines

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

The loss of Harris County's voting machines in a recent fire has prompted elections officials to promote an Election Fortnight of early voting for nearly 15 percent of Texas' usual voters.

An early morning fire Aug. 27 in north Houston decimated the warehouse holding 10,000 pieces of voting equipment, which serve the 1.9 million registered voters in the county. With the Nov. 2 election looming, County Clerk Beverly Kaufman outlined a plan to the County Commissioners Court to emphasize early voting for two weeks before Election Day.

"Early voting will be conducted in a manner that is familiar to voters," she said. "As we face this unforeseen challenge, I'm hearten(ed) that all entities that have a role in creating the county's election infrastructure are working as a team to ensure all registered voters are provided access to the voting process in a manner consistent with voting laws."

Kaufman's plan is to replace the eState electronic voting system, the state-of-the-art model that was destroyed, during the early voting period and on Election Day, and also use paper ballots as backup on Election Day. Elections department spokesman Hector de Leon said the county has ordered 3,100

machines, and the vendor has said the least it could do was produce enough machines so each polling place has one. de Leon said however many machines are received will be distributed equally.

He said the county planned to buy the replacement machines and reimburse its general fund when its insurance settlement is reached.

The county will maintain 736 polling places, an increase of eight from 2008's election, and 37 early voting locations. The challenge, de Leon said, is encouraging early voters to use all of the early voting locations, because in 2008 they tended to gravitate to eight or 10.

"As long as the lines keep moving, people don't get frustrated and go home," he said. "We had a lot of success with early voting in 2008, especially among minorities, so we are hoping that continues. We'll be replicating our effort to encourage people to vote early."

Harris County had a 33 percent turnout in the 2006 gubernatorial election, so the elections department is expecting at least 633,000 voters.

"We're doing everything in compliance with state and federal elections law to make this happen," de Leon said. "It's not the ideal situation, but things should be manageable if the voters spread out and consider the various opportunities to vote throughout those two weeks."

In Case You Missed It ... News to Use from Past County News

► Health Reform Implementation Activities

As the health reform law is implemented, NACo providing members with resources and information via the NACo website and other media outlets such as *County News*, NACo e-News and NACo's Legislative Bulletin. Special publications may also be published from time to time.

Visit www.naco.org/healthreformimplement for recordings of NACo health reform implementation webinars, FAQs and timelines, information on regulations related to the health reform law, NACo conference workshop presentations and links to additional resources. If you have specific health reform implementation questions, e-mail healthreforminfo@naco.org.

► NACo Awards Coastal Restoration Grants

NACo's Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI) has awarded more than \$582,000 to nine community-led projects to support marine habitat restoration in coastal counties around the country. Projects restore natural areas and habitat for wildlife and fish species and support coastal economies. For more information contact Cindy Wasser at cwasser@naco.org or call 202.942.4274.

Cloud computing could mean silver linings for county IT

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

"Cloud" computing may be all the rage these days. But several county IT leaders say they didn't hop on the bandwagon to be trendy. It's helping them work smarter and at lower costs, according to early adopters.

In the cloud, services and data — think word processing, e-mail and calendars — are hosted over the Internet rather than residing on a user's desktop computer or the county's local server. The cloud's computer-processing infrastructure could be hundreds of miles away.

Larimer County, Colo., Oakland County, Mich. and Klamath County, Ore. are among the counties who have taken the plunge, enabling them to save money and reassign IT staff resources.

"Outsourcing the whole e-mail infrastructure is going to save us, on average, \$10,000 a year amortized for the servers that we won't have to buy," said Andy Paratore, Larimer County's chief information officer. "On the system admin and tech support ends, on the IT staff side, we think we're going to save between a half to three-quarters of an FTE."

The county recently switched to Google's cloud applications for e-mail, instant messaging, calendars and video conferencing, becoming the first Colorado county to do so.

Trendiness had nothing to do with it; the decision was a practical one. "I wouldn't say we're an early adopter because we're really progressive; it's more of a timing thing," Paratore said. The county's aging, 14-year-old GroupWise system needed to be replaced.

Klamath County was Microsoft's first government client. It's been using Microsoft's cloud-based apps for more than a year, said IT Director Randy Paul. "I never presented it as, hey, this is a cool cloud-based computing solution. It was basically a simple lease-versus-buy financial decision," he explained. Klamath County made the switch in June 2009, and Paul said his return on investment has been about 50 percent. Both counties conducted pilots with groups of employees before converting to the cloud.

Cloud computing has generated a lot of buzz among local



Photo courtesy of Oakland County, Mich.

Tim Shepherd, a member of Oakland County, Mich.'s IT team, at work in the county's server room.

government IT executives and the technology community, according to the Public Technology Institute (PTI), a technology organization whose members are cities and counties.

Forty-five percent of city and county governments who responded to an April 2010 PTI survey are currently using cloud computing to maintain applications or provide services. Nineteen percent plan to use cloud computing services within the next 12 months, while 35 percent have no plans to move to the cloud.

Alan Shark, PTI's executive director, said two factors may be responsible for the uptick in interest. One is the economy. "The budget process is causing people think differently," he said. Phil Bertolini, Oakland County's CIO and deputy county executive, said in the 10 years he's been with the county, the IT budget has "been flat or reduced" every year.

Secondly, advances in technology are causing people to think differently. "The choices that we have did not really exist in any

meaningful way three or four years ago as they do today," Shark added.

While cloud computing is increasing in popularity, it is, in a sense, nothing new. "As the definition has

See CLOUD page 5

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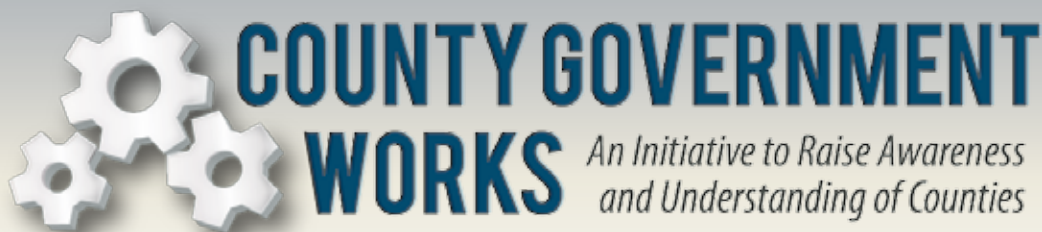
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CORRECTIONS

Two people were misidentified in photos published in the Aug. 9 issue: Weldon Cadwell, Lake County, Fla. commissioner, vice chair, Community and Economic Development Steering Committee, was misidentified as Lee May on page 6, and Daniel Fedderly, executive director of the Wisconsin Counties Highway Association, was incorrectly identified as Craig Allred on page 19.



Telling the County Story

BY GLEN WHITLEY
NACO PRESIDENT



Judge Glen Whitley
Tarrant County, Texas

I want a favor from everyone who reads this column. As your new NACo president, I'm entitled to at least one favor from you right off the bat.

Let's all of us speak to groups in our communities that we have never stood before or talked to and tell them about the importance of county government. You can talk to a service club, a nonprofit, a PTA, a faith-based group or even Little League parents. Just promise me you will make the pitch.

That's the favor I am asking for: I want you to tell the county story.

County leaders must do all they can to explain the services that counties provide and the leading role counties play in our communities. My presidential initiative, *County Government Works: An Initiative to Raise Awareness and Understanding of Counties*, is all about telling the story of county

For example, if you want to make a presentation to a local group about county government, you can use the speaking points we developed at NACo, or write your own. There are two "talking points" guides to choose from. Pick the one that most suits your needs and speaking style, add local facts important to your county and you are prepared to give a presentation on county government.

There is another tool to customize for your county — a double-sided tri-fold brochure with fast facts about your county and its elected officials, important phone numbers and information on county services. With that template, you can fill in your local details, budget and funding priorities and provide a county map with district lines or key highways.

It will take minimal computer skills to use this template to make your own brochure. Under "Printed Materials," open the "Produce a Brochure to Explain How Your County Works" link. It will explain the process to make your own brochure — in Microsoft Word or InDesign software — and it can be reproduced easily in black and white on a regular copier.

Also, check out the great explanation of how Florida's Pinellas and Hillsborough counties conduct "Citizen Universities." The sessions are an eight-week, hands-on curriculum to educate citizens about counties and how decisions are made to provide services. You can learn about how the university concept can work in your county, the resources you will need and how

to avoid mistakes made in the development of the programs.

"County Government Works" features an array of different ways to enhance the public's understanding of counties, including activities that can be done during County Government Month in May. More tools are on the way.

But you don't have to wait that long to get started talking about the good work counties do. And, you shouldn't.

Back to the favor I asked of you. Help us strengthen the bond between the American people and America's counties by telling the county story now. County government is the best local government that serves the American people, because County Government Works.

www.naco.org

- ▶ About NACo
- ▶ Presidential Initiative

Oil leak task force joins Gulf Coast counties, states

BY CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

While trying to manage the results of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, BP set fire to the oil on the surface of the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, with the well capped and the counties still reeling from the disaster's impact, a NACo oil leak task force will continue to hold the federal government's feet to the fire.

NACo President Glenn Whitley has created the Gulf Counties & Parishes Oil Spill Task Force to ensure that the needs of local governments associated with the leak are addressed sufficiently by the federal government.

Advancing hundreds of millions of local tax dollars to respond to the disaster have put Gulf state counties in a difficult position. On top of serving on the front lines of the effort to contain, clean up and recover from the leak, they are providing enhanced social services to meet the needs of people affected.

"It's crucial that our residents get the mental health support they need," said Roland Darte, executive director of the Police Jury

Association of Louisiana, the state association of parishes. "Our people are getting hit with something every year, and there's only so much they can take. Depression is a real threat down here."

Whitley serves as chair of the task force, whose members are executive directors of state associations of counties — Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi and Texas — and two elected officials from each state.

The task force's agenda for the White House focuses on four major concerns:

- establishing a dedicated federal funding program to reimburse counties and parishes for cleanup expenses and lost revenue
- streamlining the local government claims submission and reimbursement process
- supporting the lifting of the moratorium on deep-water drilling to mitigate economic losses in the region, and
- supporting additional resources to address the mental health needs of Gulf Coast residents.

See **TASK FORCE** page 4

County leaders must do all they can to explain the services that counties provide and the leading role counties play in our communities.

government. The initiative calls on county officials, state associations, public information officers and NACo to work together to get the word out.

And wouldn't you know, we are building a library of tools to make it easier for all of us to tell that county story.

You can get to our nifty NACo toolbox two ways, both on the NACo website. Go to www.naco.org and look under the "About NACo" heading and drop down to the "Presidential Initiative" tab and click on it. Or, look under the "About Counties" heading and click on "Tell the Public What Counties Do." There you will find the County Government Works Campaign page and other useful information.

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Santa Barbara explores waste conversion technology

By SUPERVISOR SALUD CARBAJAL
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

What exactly is conversion technology (CT)? CT is a process to convert garbage into green energy and other marketable items.

This can be achieved by using heat, pressure, bacteria, acid or a combination of these. There are many different types of CT that produce different levels of energy and different products. These products can range from beverage containers returned to traditional recycling markets, compost for agricultural use, chemicals for industrial use or metals resold as scrap. In every case, CT significantly diverts waste away from landfills and dramatically increases recycling.

Even before considering CT, Santa Barbara County has long been a regional leader in innovative



Supervisor Salud Carbajal
Santa Barbara, Calif.

waste management programs with an exceptionally high recycling rate above 70 percent.

The county-owned and -operated Tajiguas Landfill has been a key part of our regional waste management system. Despite

winning national awards for both landfill management and solid waste programs (two gold and one silver Solid Waste Association of North America Excellence Awards), the county's environmentally conscientious residents and elected leaders wanted more when planning out a long-term solution for our waste.

In 2002, after granting Tajiguas Landfill's most recent expansion, the county Board of Supervisors asked its staff to look into alternatives. Staff research suggested establishing a CT facility as a means of increasing our diversion.

Although CT has been common in Europe and East Asia for the past 20 years, here in the U.S., this is still uncharted territory. It has been a common joke in California that, despite the increasing interest in CT, "every community wants to be the first to be second." Through local leadership from the county and affected cities, we hope to overcome this fear of trying something new.

Partnering with the cities that currently use the county-owned Tajiguas Landfill was an early and crucial step in this project. A project that is as innovative and new as CT, must have input and support from all affected jurisdictions in order to succeed. A multi-jurisdictional group was established in 2007 by the Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara City Council to lead this project. Since that time, we have been able

to incorporate representation from all five affected jurisdictions.

Beyond partnerships with the affected cities, we directed staff to engage in a broad-based education and outreach program with all stakeholders. Outreach performed for this project has included more than 60 public meetings with local sanitation districts, environmental interest groups, local Chambers of Commerce, community nonprofits, and all of the cities in the county.

This type of community dialog has been crucial in educating the public about what CT is and giving local government a better understanding of the community's goals and concerns.

The lack of existing CT facilities in the U.S. has allowed for a lot of misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy. CT facilities are often confused with more common "waste-to-energy" facilities also known as incinerators. However, there is a big difference between CT and incineration. Even the CTs that use high levels of heat (often

referred to as "thermal CT") do so in a low- or zero-oxygen environment. This lack of oxygen does not allow the material to ignite and instead creates a synthetic gas that can be further processed and used later as a fuel. This extra step allows greater control over potential air emissions.

As mentioned before, some types of CT don't rely on heat but, instead use bacteria or acid to create a fuel or energy from solid waste. These types of technologies have fewer air emissions concerns, but are limited in the type of waste they can use to create fuel, leaving a larger amount of residue that could still need to be landfilled.

In most cases, CT does not entirely eliminate all waste. The amount that is left over can sometimes be used in road building or sold as compost. In all cases the residual waste is preferable to unprocessed solid waste because it is inert and free of potentially harmful environmental impacts like greenhouse gas emissions.

Landfills are a source of greenhouse gases. Waste that is buried begins to decompose and produce methane. Even best management practices, such as capturing and burning the gases for the generation of electricity, only capture around 75 percent of the greenhouse gases. CT eliminates 99 percent of these gases by processing waste in a closed environment. CT is similar, on a chemical level, to the decomposition of waste that happens in landfills. The difference is that CT speeds up and optimizes the process of decomposition, maximizing energy production and eliminating environmentally harmful compounds.

There are many different types of CT available, and our project has not defined which technology will be used. The request for proposals that we released in October is "technology neutral," focusing on achieving our goals of improving the environment, financial feasibility, generation of green energy, and operational success. Due to the newness of CT, we felt that a goal-oriented process would be the best way of matching what kind CT would work best with our community. The four responses to our RFP we received in June of this year reflect this objective as they represent a broad array of different technologies.

Santa Barbara County along with its city partners will be evaluating potential vendors over the next five months. We are hopeful that through this process we can lead the way for other counties and local governments to join us in a new era of waste management.

Profiles in Service



» Patrick O. Duterte

Health Steering Committee

Director of Health and Social Services
Solano County, Calif.

Number of years active in NACo: 5

Years in public service: 32

Occupation: director, Health and Social Services Department

Education: B.A., U.C. Berkeley; M.S., San Francisco State University

The hardest thing I've ever done: carry an M60 while serving in Vietnam—1st Cavalry Division

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Mozart, Beethoven and Jimi Hendrix. It may not be the best dinner conversation but the after-dinner entertainment would be glorious.

A dream I have is to: hike the entire Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: unicycle and rollerblade as my regular exercise regimen.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: helicopter ski at Whistler Mountain, Canada or unicycle down Northstar Ski Area, Calif.

My favorite way to relax is: Bikram (Hot) Yoga three times a week.

I'm most proud of: my wife, Diane, five children (Keefe, Erin, Yelena, Marcus and Shaylynn) and my 94-year-old father, Dr. Rodolfo Duterte.

Every morning I read: *The San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Fairfield Daily Republic*.

My favorite meal is: cracked Dungeness crab with sourdough bread and a glass of a fine Napa Cabernet.

The last book I read was: *War* by Sebastian Junger. Even though it's about war in Afghanistan, it parallels closely with my experience as a combat vet in Vietnam.

My favorite movie is: All Quentin Tarantino movies (*Pulp Fiction*, etc.)

My favorite music is: Kings of Leon, Ray LaMontagne, Brett Dennen, Jamaican and West African Reggae.

My favorite president is: John F. Kennedy.

Oil leak task force focuses on collateral economic damage

TASK FORCE from page 3

"For us the main issue is the loss of tax revenue at the county level," said Sonny Brasfield executive director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. "This task force is an excellent way to get the issue to the front of the discussion."

He said that the tax revenue losses have spread far beyond Alabama's coastline. "It's almost 400 miles from northern Alabama to our beaches, and people have to travel, and spend money, getting through the state to the Gulf, and without the tourism drawing them there, businesses aren't doing so well this summer," he said. "The exclusive attention seems to be on the few miles of coastline."

Dartez worries about the local tax revenue implications at the moratorium on deep-water drilling, one of the state's main industries.

"I'm worried that our parishes won't be reimbursed for the lost revenue thanks to the moratorium," he said. "We're looking at \$400 million in lost revenues for state and local governments, and BP has already said it's not responsible for the moratorium."

"President Obama wouldn't have signed it without the explosion, and BP was responsible for the explosion, so the cause is there."

Dartez was encouraged by news that the \$20 billion fund to pay claims was not capped, but he worries that too many entities will be drawing from that pot.

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Some counties consider operating their own IT clouds

CLOUD from page 2

expanded, people have realized that in many cases they have been in the cloud the last couple of years," Shark said. His organization's membership software system is "essentially" cloud-based, in that its database can be accessed from anywhere via the Internet.

In an older incarnation of "the cloud," Bertolini said, his county has been delivering technologies to its local municipalities for more than 35 years, over the county's fiber-optic network that connects 62 cities and towns.

"Across the network itself, we provide them high-speed Internet and e-mail services at no cost," he said. The "county cloud" also provides public safety systems to 200-plus public safety agencies in six counties in southeast Michigan, and systems for land address management and animal licensing. "When you think about the cloud, you can go back and wonder: 'Was the mainframe originally a cloud?'" he said, referring to the days when office workers had so-called "dumb" terminals on their desks connected to mainframe computers.

Bertolini isn't averse to using vendors, but he favors a hybrid "government cloud" — partly for reasons of security — where an outside company could operate cloud services from inside a government's data center. "Other governments would consume it knowing the data's stored here at Oakland, or stored at the state of Michigan or stored somewhere else," he said.

"If I were to say here in Oakland County, we're just going to have Google host all our e-mail, the first people that would stand up and wave their hands at me would be law enforcement."

That's been the case in the city of Los Angeles, which is moving its 30,000 employees' e-mail to Google's online applications. The \$7.25-million project was to have been completed by the end of June, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. It was delayed because of the L.A. Police Department's concerns about data security. California state law requires that police data be encrypted and employees with access to the data have background checks. Google has been working to address their concerns.

Klamath County's Randy Paul

said he had no overriding concerns about security and is satisfied with the assurances his vendor has provided. "In e-mail, our policy is, for example, we shouldn't be sending HIPAA data or confidential case information over e-mail in the first place," he said. "E-mail is as private as a postcard."

Further, he said most of an organization's security risk comes from within. Employees are responsible for 70 percent of unauthorized access to information systems, he said according to a study by Gartner, an IT research and advisory firm.

With a staff of 10, Paul might designate one employee to manage an in-house e-mail system — to be in charge of spam filtering, archiving, the e-mail server and domain security. A vendor might have teams of people who do nothing but spam filtering, he said. "I don't have the budget to build that sort of expertise in-house."

In addition to using hosted applications, Shark said some governments are considering storing more of their data offsite with private vendors. "That's the piece that's gaining more interest and popularity," he said.

But there are concerns about

whether the data would be as well protected as if they managed it themselves. Just recently, the state of Virginia's centralized computers, managed in a public-private partnership, failed for several days, affecting motor vehicle license renewals, tax returns and payments.

When centralized data systems fail, it can cause huge problems for client agencies whose applications depend on that data, Shark said. "No system is perfect, but I think you have to really insure that these applications have absolute redundancy."

While tough times may be leading counties to consider the cloud, Paul says never outsource just to save money. "It's balancing your IT portfolio. Any money that I spend in technology needs to be bringing back more than we're putting in."

Paul and Larimer County's Paratore moved to the cloud because their existing systems needed replacing. In addition, Paratore found Google's applications fit the county's growing emphasis on collaboration. Their product was in line with the county's desire to do more team work, allow documents to be shared and worked on collaboratively, and reduce transportation costs between

campuses with the video conferencing technology.

Shark says if a county has recently invested in a new data center, moving to the cloud doesn't make sense, because of the need to amortize that investment.

So far, the cost-benefit math appears to favor the counties' cloud migrations. Paul says it's freed up staff resources. "I've got the ability now to get them out that 'fireman mode' into developing some skill sets that we can use to build up in other areas," he said. "That's where I'm putting the savings. It's allowing us to leverage what we've got a lot more effectively."

Paratore said since switching to cloud apps in July, he's surveyed 1,850 employees about their user experience with the new system. Of the 230 who responded, 70 percent "were positive."

For counties considering the cloud, Shark advises there's no single formula for cloud computing. "The sky is full of many different kinds of clouds ... and there could be some storm clouds," he said. "You just have to understand and weigh the risks in light of your current investment and what you're trying to accomplish."



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Counties urge reauthorization of Rural Schools Program

By RYAN YATES
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
AND ARIELLE EISER
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS INTERN

County commissioners from 33 of Oregon's counties called upon U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to include a long-term reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) in the President's FY12 budget at a recent roundtable discussion held in Portland, Ore.

The event, hosted by Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.), represented an opportunity for county commissioners, the Oregon congressional delegation and Vilsack to discuss the critical role SRS plays in preserving vital public services to rural forest counties.

The elected officials were joined in their request by representatives from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Trout Unlimited and the Wilderness Society.

Originally passed and signed into law in 2000, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act represents a contract between the federal government and more than 700 rural counties and school districts, which have historically depended on revenues from timber harvests on federal lands in their jurisdictions. Historically, rural communities and schools have relied upon a share of these receipts to supplement



Photo courtesy of Association of Oregon Counties

It was a packed room when Oregon county officials met with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to discuss Secure Rural Schools funding in Multnomah County (Portland), Ore. Aug. 20.

local funding for education services and roads. In response to the steep decline in timber sales, Congress passed SRS and President Clinton signed the bill into law. The original authorization provided six years of funding, and in 2007 Congress extended SRS for one year. In 2008, the 110th Congress reauthorized the program for a four-year period to last from 2008 through 2011.

The current act expires on Sept. 30, 2011, and the final 2011 payments will be distributed in Janu-

ary 2012. County commissioners who participated in the roundtable stressed the importance of reauthorizing SRS immediately. Steve Grasty, Association of Oregon Counties president and Harney County judge said, "We asked Secretary Vilsack to include a long-term reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools in the president's 2012 budget. He seemed receptive to the concept and we hope that translates into concrete action." Grasty emphasized to Vilsack that, without reauthorization, rural com-

munities will be adversely impacted economically, and roads in and out of federal lands will suffer from a lack of maintenance.

Many of the county commissioners who participated in the roundtable shared personal stories from their counties with Vilsack on the impact of the loss of the federal

funds. Curry County Commissioner Bill Waddle talked about kids getting their only full meal of the day at school and not having anything to eat later on. Curry County Commissioner Georgia Nowlin said she told the secretary "68 percent of our general fund was from Secure Rural Schools in 2006-2007; public safety gets 50 percent of the budget from it... It is not just the citizens, but people coming into the area, Search and Rescue, the marine patrol. I mentioned the family from San Francisco that got stranded on Bear Camp Road."

After the event, Commissioner Dan Shoun of Lake County, felt that "the secretary left with a much better appreciation of the situation." Commissioner Cheryl Hukill of Klamath County said, "The stories Secretary Vilsack heard about the impacts on children and public safety made a deep impression on him."

Federal agencies are currently working on the final drafts of their 2012 budget requests, which were to go to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) by Labor Day. Having a commitment from Vilsack would be a major step forward for the reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools to be ultimately included in President Obama's 2012 budget request to Congress, the officials said.

Miami-Dade uses EECBG funds for energy-efficiency workshops

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Miami-Dade County sees its overall energy use as fertile soil to plant seeds of conservation.

A \$12.5 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will fund workshops in each of the county's 13 commission districts over three months. Organizers are also considering workshops for non-English-speaking residents.

With an estimated 2.5 million residents in 2009, the county is on a scale where just a small improvement in energy efficiency in each home has the potential to cut aggregate energy use for the county dramatically.

Not content to think small, Dream in Green, the nonprofit contracted to conduct the workshops, is

hoping for 20 percent to 30 percent energy-use reduction in the households that participate.

"We're hoping to show people you don't have to spend a lot to retrofit your home to generate energy savings and efficiency," said Maggie Fernandez, spokeswoman for the County's Office of Sustainability. "I saw \$65 of improvements lower my energy bill by \$430, mostly from just adding insulation."

Workshop participants receive energy savings kits worth almost \$100, containing 10 compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs, water gauges, refrigerator thermometers and caulking materials.

Organizers hope for 50 households to be represented at each workshop. The first, held in late August, had 40.

Dream in Green Executive Director Kristin Hebert said identifying

major energy drains and processes that do not need to be powered will cut a lot of energy use.

"Most people in Miami-Dade County spend their money on air conditioning, and there are several ways to ensure its being used efficiently," she said. "Sealing homes and offices so cold air doesn't get out, and keeping air conditioning equipment in good condition go a long way."

In addition, many appliances use power even when they are not in use, so they could just as easily be unplugged.

The county's sustainability office has a checklist on its website, <http://green.miamidade.gov>, that calculates energy savings for taking various steps to improve in carbon offset measurements and financial cost. Meeting all 15 steps could add up to \$750 in annual savings.

This Month in ... County News

County News celebrates NACo's 75th Anniversary with a look back at the issues and events that affected counties over the past several decades.

★ September ★

1983

- President Ronald Reagan appointed NACo President Sandra R. Smoley to his task force on Food Assistance in early September. The president created this task force to review, from a managerial standpoint, the service delivery of food programs for the needy.

- Secretary of Agriculture John Block announced a new administration policy to authorize five-year extensions, without interest, on federal timber sale contracts. The extensions applied to sales before Jan. 1982. The announcement reversed the administration's earlier opposition to timber sale contract relief.

1984

Three developments in antitrust happened for local government in August:

- The House voted 414-5 to exempt local government officials from damages under federal antitrust laws

- NACo petitioned the U.S. District Court in Chicago to accept an *amicus* brief on behalf of Lake County, Ill. which faced a \$28.5 million judgment in an antitrust suit brought on by a development company, and

- NACo decided to file another *amicus* brief before the U.S. Supreme Court, in a case arising from a dispute over the use of a sewage treatment plant.

(This Month in County News is compiled by Charlie Ban, staff writer, and Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant.)

County leaders honored as champions of the arts

By JACQUELINE BYERS
RESEARCH AND OUTREACH DIRECTOR

Fairfax County, Va. is the recipient of the 2010 Arts and Culture Award for its Ossian Hall International Performance Series. The NACo Arts and Culture Commission sponsor the Arts and Culture Awards program. Awards are presented at the commission's annual awards dinner held during NACo's Annual Conference.

Fairfax County's program uses arts and culture to shift a potential gang hot spot into a community asset and attract new immigrants as park users, creating a sense of park ownership.

The County Leadership in the Arts Award, a joint award of the Americans for the Arts and NACo, was presented to Salt Lake County, Utah Council Member Jim Bradley for his work in spearheading a special tax and funding for the arts.

The final award, the Arts Advocacy Award, is presented by the Arts Commission to a recipient in the conference's host county who has been selected by the local arts community as the most deserving. This year's award was presented to Tim Jones, chairman of the board



Fairfax County, Va. Supervisors Penny Gross and Gerry Hyland (r) show off the county's Arts and Culture award presented by Jay Dick (l), Americans for the Arts.

Photo by Judy Rolfe

of the Nevada Arts Council, for his outstanding support of the organization and arts in Nevada.

A special surprise award was presented to Pulaski County, Ark. Justice of the Peace Mary Louise Williams, the outgoing chair of

the Arts and Culture Commission.

This year's dinner was hosted by the Arts and Culture Commission, the Nevada Arts Council, the Sierra Council on the Arts and Cathexes. The sponsors were Americans for the Arts and Siemens.

NACo opposes ADA Segway inclusion

ADA REGS from page 1

The new standards will apply to new construction and alterations.

Following is an analysis of some of the changes to the major issues of concern to NACo.

Safe Harbor Provisions

Elements that have not been altered on or after 18 months from the date of publication and are in compliance with technical and scoping specifications in either the 1991 standards or the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards of 2002 do not have to be altered. "Elements" is a generic term which can mean anything from a swimming pool to a jail.

However, the safe harbor provision does not apply to elements for which there were no technical specifications in the 1991 standards. Elements that could be affected include park areas, swimming pools, golf and mini-golf areas, dwelling units, exercise machines and equipment, fishing piers and platforms, recreational boating facilities and shooting ranges.

In its comments on the proposed regulations, NACo suggested clarification about alternative accessibility provisions rather than retrofitting facilities. A Q&A Fact Sheet provided by the Department of Justice states that public entities may pursue alternatives to structural changes in order to achieve program accessibility.

Definition of Mobility Devices

The new rules would extend the definition of power-driven mobility devices to include devices such as Segways. NACo had opposed this expansion because Segways are incompatible with the pace of pedestrians and wheelchairs, and could constitute a hazard as well as cause undue wear and tear on sidewalks, trails and ramps. The rules do, however, allow local governments to demonstrate that the devices cannot be operated in accordance with safety requirements.

Detention and Correctional Facilities

New construction of jails and

detention facilities must comply with the 2010 standards and have accessible mobility features in 3 percent of the facility's cells. Cells with mobility features must be provided in each classification.

These standards and requirements also apply to alterations. The standard may be satisfied by providing mobility features in cells other than the ones where the alterations are originally planned, provided they have equal access to dining, education, medical, work, recreational and religious service areas.

Funding

There is no new funding to help implement these changes, but ADA compliance is an allowable expenditure under the Community Development Block Grant.

The Department of Justice has a number of useful documents on the ADA website, www.ada.gov, including the unofficial rules, the Q&A and a fact sheet on the 2010 standards. The department also plans to post an impact analysis on its website.

Not technically pot, spice stymies counties

SPICE BAN from page 1

New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania have legislation pending, and Arkansas, Hawaii, Iowa and North Dakota's boards of health have taken action to ban it.

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour (R) recently asked the state legislature to consider a ban during its special session.

"Spice is no different than marijuana and should be treated as every other controlled substance under our laws," he said.

Spice producers add a chemical spray, which contains a compound that has an effect similar to that of marijuana, to herbs and package it as incense. Users roll it into cigarettes or smoke it in pipes. Selling Spice as incense circumvents Food and Drug Administration testing.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates the effect of smoking Spice as 10 to 15 times stronger than marijuana. Various public health agencies report that symptoms of Spice use include nausea, vomiting, fast heartbeat, agitation, hypertension, vertigo, hallucinations, muscle spasms and in one case in Henry County, Ind., a 17-year-old boy became so disoriented he couldn't figure out how to unlock a door so he destroyed the door, Commissioner Kim Cronk told the *Star Press*.

Hearing about Spice from his teenage children imparted some immediacy to Boone County, Ind. Commissioner Jeff Wolfe when the county prosecutor told the Board of Commissioners that the substance was becoming a problem in Indiana. The Board passed an ordinance in August, banning its sale in the county.

"I was concerned that Spice was available to anybody — it was something that small children could get their hands

on," he said. "It's not a statement about the folks who sold it — it was legal and we don't hold them in contempt. It's not far-reaching, it just bans it from store shelves, but it's a start, and it sends a message to the state that it's something the legislature needs to look at."

Wolfe was encouraged to see that nearby Morgan and Henry counties followed Boone in banning Spice within a week.

The compound was derived from the published research of Clemson University chemist John Huffman, who developed it for clinical research for therapeutic use, including brain damage related to stroke, traumatic brain injury, glaucoma and multiple sclerosis. He has publicly condemned recreational use of the substance.

The DEA lists five variations as "chemicals of concern," but because Spice doesn't contain THC, the chemical that makes marijuana, hemp and other cannabis illegal, it is not included on the list of controlled substances.

DEA Spokesman Michael Sanders said Spice is a drug of concern to his agency, which is trying to find a way to add it to the list of controlled substances.

"It's a little more complex to write a blanket ban on all synthetic marijuana substances," he said. "Once we have one, it makes it a lot more likely to hold up in court if the defendant just changed a few molecules and created a new variation of Spice."

As of Aug. 25, poison control centers reported 1,109 calls about Spice products, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), with 52 calls over the previous five days.

AAPCC spokeswoman Jessica Wehrman said the calls started in late 2009 in Missouri and have come mainly in Indiana, Texas, Utah, Georgia, Iowa and Louisiana, though centers have received calls in nearly every state.

County News

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Local 'celebrities' invigorate children's story line

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

How do you take a decades-old library program and give it a shot in the arm? "Celebritize" it.

That's what Library Director Steve McCartney did with the Meridian-Lauderdale County (Miss.) Public Library's 20-year-old dial-a-story service. He got local celebrities to read children's books for Celebrity Storyline — TV personalities, a mayor, even a county supervisor.

Lauderdale County Supervisor Ray Boswell took to the microphone Aug. 17 to read *NASCAR ABCs*.

"A is for APRON — just beside the track. Also for AIR WRENCH — to put the tires back," he intoned in a recent recording session.

"It turned out pretty good," Boswell said. "It created quite a bit of talk in the community."

Using local notables has been "an extremely cost-effective shot in the arm" for the library, McCartney said. "It gives us an opportunity to take folks that everybody knows, and through their reading of the story, promote their support of the library and what it does. And it hasn't cost us a dime."

What it has done is gotten the program a lot of free publicity.

"The local news media, both our local newspaper and our primary television station, every time we

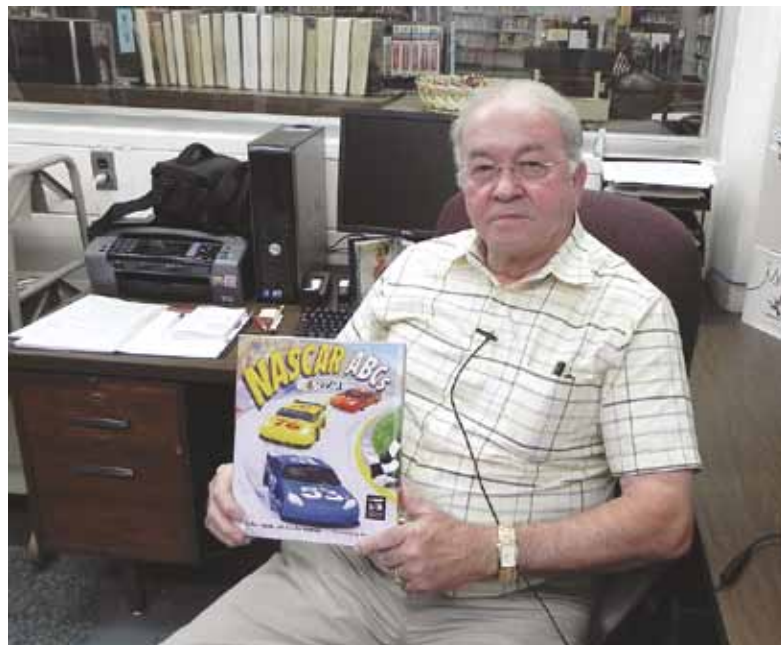


Photo courtesy of Lauderdale County (Miss.) Public Library

Lauderdale County, Miss. Supervisor Ray Boswell displays *NASCAR ABCs*, the book he read for the county library's Celebrity Storyline for children.

call them — every two weeks — we say, 'Hey, we've got a new celebrity reader' ... and they come down and they cover it," McCartney said.

"In today's economy, with all the economic shortfalls that we all have to face, you've got to be creative with things, and this has proven to be just wonderful."

Dial-a-story programs are nothing new, but using newer technologies and methods to distribute the stories is. Sussex County, Del.'s service has been around for at

least 35 years, according to Carol Fitzgerald, the county's library director. "It's now digital, where originally they were old eight-track tapes," she said.

Back in Lauderdale County, Boswell was the first reader who was also videotaped reading a story, and the video has been posted on YouTube and the library's Facebook page. "So we've taken the old technology and kind of incorporated it into our new efforts too," McCartney said.



Photo courtesy of Sussex County, Del.

Carolyn Hitchens records a children's story for Sussex County (Del.) Department of Libraries' dial-a-story service.

Despite those changes, the goals are still the same.

"The goal of the service is just to provide another means of encouraging reading and literacy for young children," Fitzgerald said.

"Because as they hear stories read, it does expand their vocabulary. And it does prepare them to learn to read."

See **STORY LINE** page 9

Conservation Fund training scholarship winners announced

By CINDY WASSER
COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSISTANT

NACo recently announced the recipients of scholarships to attend the Conservation Fund's training program called Strategic Conservation Planning Using the Green Infrastructure Approach. NACo and the U.S. Forest Service will award a total of \$7,600 in scholarships to eight county elected officials and staff from across the country. They are:

- Tony Norman, county commissioner, Knox County, Tenn.
- Grant Rosenberg, director of Neighborhoods and Community Development, Knox County, Tenn.
- Les Beck, planning and development director, Linn County, Iowa
- Jeff Cox, development coordinator, Sierra County, N.M.
- Jamie MacLean, development planner, Montgomery County, Va.
- Heather Schmidt, water quality specialist, Johnson County, Kan.
- Jay Sikes, senior planner, Harnett County, N.C.
- Kenneth Ward, public works-

engineering project manager, Caddo Parish, La.

The term "green infrastructure" refers to a planned and managed system of green spaces, greenways and natural lands. Scientists claim these areas help conserve, filter or absorb water, remove particulate matter from the air and provide heat relief.

The program works with participants on how to develop more sustainable communities and use green spaces to the best advantage without losing revenue or constituent support.

The training will be held Sept. 13-17 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, W. Va.

Scholarships were made possible through funding from the U.S. Forest Service's National Urban and Community Advisory Council and through NACo's partnership with the Conservation Fund.

NACo will offer a second round of scholarships for county officials and staff next summer. For more information, visit www.naco.org/greeninfrastructure.

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NACRC awards honor clerk, register of deeds for excellence

Maricopa County, Ariz. Recorder Helen Purcell is this year's winner of the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks' (NACRC) Public Official of the Year Award.

The award honors a person who exemplifies leadership, ingenuity and excellence in his or her office.

Purcell's peers recognize her as one of the most efficient and conscientious recorders in the United States. She is equally respected among her county's constituency because of her commitment to professionalism and ethical principles, NACRC said.

"Purcell has demonstrated integrity and skill in overseeing the recorder's office for one of the nation's largest counties," said Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett.

"She has worked tirelessly to improve election access and security, improving voting equipment and making her county among the

nation's leaders in vote-by-mail technology."

NACRC also presented its Linda S. Carter Award for Excellence in Government to Merrimack County, N.H. Register of Deeds Kathi Guay.

Guay served as the president of NACRC in 2008-09 and has been an active member for 22 years. In just one year as president, she helped revitalize the Certified Public Official program, initiated NACRC's first strategic planning meeting, rolled out the NACRC's *eNews* and its first webinar.

"Kathi is tireless in efforts to make government and the property records industry a better place," said Mark Monacelli, recorder, St. Louis County, Minn.

The award was established in 2000 in memory of Carter, NACRC's second vice president.

Both awards were presented at the NACRC Annual Conference in Reno, Nev., in July.

Library story lines attract some unlikely listeners

STORY LINE from page 8

McCartney adds, "If we can get a book in the hands of one kid who's a nontraditional library user, the entire program's a success."

In Sussex County, the stories follow seasonal themes — holiday stories around the holidays, summer stories during the hottest months. Fitzgerald said some months as many as 2,000 calls come into the storyline. In one two-week period, McCartney's line received 9,000 calls — "remarkable," he says, in a county of 37,000 people.

And those calls aren't just from kids. "We've had adults that might be having a difficult time at work one day and just need to have a relaxing

moment will call in. We've even had prisoners in the local jail who have called in just for, I guess, a diversion from their day-to-day activities," he said.

So for Boswell, what was it like; did the veteran supervisor of more than 20 years feel like a celebrity? "Well, I don't know..." he said.

"I try to do whatever I can to help any organization throughout Lauderdale County, and anything I can do to promote interest in the community, I try to do that."

(To hear Boswell read *NASCAR ABCs*, go to www.youtube.com and do a search on "RBoswellStoryline.")



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Model Programs

FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Competitive Mapping Energizes Parish's Students

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Fifth graders in Calcasieu Parish, La. combined their graphing and geography lessons to square off in a test of skills.

"The Amazing Race: Calcasieu" pitted classrooms against one another to see who had the best Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills. Students strived to be the first to locate landmarks designated for their classrooms in a type of scavenger hunt.

The competition was in conjunction with National GIS week in November 2009 and the unveiling of Calcasieu Parish's new GIS portal.

Given the ease with which children learn, the parish GIS department figured having 13 classrooms full of students

who knew how to use the system would help spread awareness of the new tool.

"We thought it was a great age to target," said GIS analyst Becky Poole. "They are definitely computer-savvy and aren't afraid to dive into something new.

"It raised their awareness of what GIS is, that it's available to them and their families."

Throughout the week, the GIS department sent clues to each of the 13 competing classes, sometimes directing them to the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury website to look for clues, which added to a scavenger hunt feel. Each of the classes had its own landmarks to find, which could be as mundane as a bridge or distinctive as a statue or piece of public art.

Website Content Manager Julie Fay said the parish created a special

GIS layer for the students to use. Their basic instruction demonstrated how x and y coordinates on a piece of graph paper corresponded to a location on a map. As their skills manipulating the website increased, students saw how GIS could be used for more sophisticated purposes.

"They saw how adults use the system," Fay said. "Realtors use it to identify flood plains. We have different mosquito-spraying routes and the storm-water system is on there."

(Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights Achievement Award-winning programs. For more information on this and other NACo Achievement Award winners, visit NACo's Web site, www.naco.org ▶ Resource Library ▶ Model County Programs.)

NACo Deferred Compensation Program makes the grade

By LISA COLE
DIRECTOR, NACo FINANCIAL SERVICES CORPORATION

With the current economic turmoil, it is essential that investors (be they employed or retired) are assured that their personal and retirement investments are with a financially strong company.

With that premise, as part of its oversight of its Deferred Compensation Program, NACo hires an independent consultant to evaluate several different program aspects. These include the creditworthiness of Nationwide Financial, the parent company of program administrator, Nationwide Retirement Solutions, and the competitiveness of the fixed annuity investment option return to program participants.

The consultants' 2010 report was presented at the NACo Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee meeting held in July in conjunction with the NACo Annual Conference. In their analysis of the creditworthiness of Nationwide, the

consultants noted that Nationwide continues as a strong organization and those indicators which had trended down in 2008 — such as risk-based capital, problem assets and liquidity — have improved. In addition to the consultants' monitoring, the committee receives updates from Nationwide financial analysts at each of its meetings during the year.

The NACo deferred compensation program, also known as a 457 program, is a voluntary investment program that gives county employees the opportunity to save regularly for their retirement on a pre-tax basis.

One of the investment options available to participants is a fixed annuity that offers county employees the opportunity to earn an investment return at a fixed rate that is established quarterly by Nationwide. In addition, on an annual basis, Nationwide sets an investment rate minimum (or floor) for the year.

According to the study, the 2009 return on this investment option

placed highest among its competitors. This study has been conducted every year since 1989, and the NACo program has always come out on top. "We are delighted that through our 30-year partnership with NRS, we are able to help county employees save for a more comfortable retirement in a quality program — this is more important than ever in today's economy," said Larry Naake, NACo executive director.

The consultants' analyses are only one feature of NACo's deferred compensation program that distinguishes it from others. As a result of NACo's Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee, the NACo program is the only one in the country that receives oversight and is advised by county participants. It also benefits from the oversight and endorsement of 41 state associations of counties.

(For further information on NACo's Deferred Compensation program, please contact Lisa Cole at NACo at 202.942.4270 or lcole@naco.org.)

News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

• **MENDOCINO COUNTY** supervisors will invite five other counties to participate in a symposium aimed at creating a **regional effort to eradicate marijuana** in the Mendocino National Forest.

Sheriff Thomas Allman and supervisors will invite officials from the other counties that contain portions of the 913,306-acre forest, along with state and federal officials. The counties are Lake, Trinity, Tehama, Glenn and Colusa.

Allman said he is also planning a multi-county law enforcement eradication operation, beginning next spring, the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* reported.

About 75 percent of the marijuana seized by the state's Campaign Against Marijuana Planting last year was on public lands.

• More than 500 trash collectors, garbage sorters and drivers in **SAN MATEO COUNTY** called a **48-hour strike** last month after contract negotiations stalled between workers at the Ox Mountain Landfill, near Half Moon Bay, and Allied Waste Industries, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

The contract for the 12 workers at the landfill expired at the end of 2009. Truck drivers, garbage collectors and workers at Allied Waste's headquarters in San Carlos walked out in solidarity with their colleagues at the landfill, company and union officials said.

► FLORIDA

MARION COUNTY created a registry of **abandoned, foreclosed properties** and mandates that such lots will be kept tidy.

Lenders with mortgages in default as of Oct. 1 are required to inspect those lots within two months to determine if any are vacant.

Properties deemed vacant will be considered abandoned and registered with the county. Lenders will then be required to pay a \$100 yearly registration fee for each parcel and maintain them, including mowing lawns, cleaning swimming pools and keeping lots free of trash, junk or anything else that gives "the appearance that the property is abandoned." Lenders may also be required to board up properties, *Ocala.com* reported.

Meanwhile, **ST. LUCIE COUNTY** commissioners recently

adopted an ordinance requiring vacant or foreclosed homes within the unincorporated areas to be registered with the county's Code Compliance Division.

► INDIANA

VIGO COUNTY commissioners rejected an ordinance that would allow **all-terrain vehicles** to travel on county roads, the *Tribune-Star* reported.

"The law says they can ride along the easement if there is room enough. I think that is as far as this county should go," Vigo County Sheriff Jon Marvel told commissioners. "I think anytime you put, and it could be a young kid on these four-wheelers, [ATVs] out in the road where cars are driving and trucks, you are inviting disaster."

► KANSAS

The state Fire Marshal's office will review its declaration that the **MARION COUNTY Jail can only hold four inmates** and that 24-hour fire watch must be provided.

The decision to review the case was based on an architect's calculation that the upstairs of the jail should be allowed to hold 20 people including staff.

Commission Chairman Randy Dallke said he realized the fire marshal has different priorities than the county and said he thought smoke detectors, which the jail already has, would be more effective than employees at noticing fires, in any case.

He said he might be willing to take the fire marshal to court over the ruling, because there doesn't appear to be anywhere else to appeal it, according to the *Peabody Gazette-Bulletin*. He suggested the county could move the sheriff's department and emergency communications department out of the building and convert it entirely to jail space.

► MONTANA

MISSOULA COUNTY commissioners say they're prepared to **sue the Montana Department of Transportation** to stop a parade of high-and-wide shipments through the county to the Alberta, Canada tar sands.

A district judge in Idaho imposed an injunction recently denying permits for a separate set of oversized shipments from Lewiston, Idaho to Billings.

In his ruling, Idaho District Judge John Bradbury said the Idaho Transportation Department failed to address the "inevitable" accident or breakdown that could "shut down



Photo courtesy of ARLNow.com

ARLINGTON COUNTY's Fire Station #5 was the first to respond when the Pentagon was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001. As a tribute to the firefighters' bravery, Arlington's Fire Department was presented a section of steel from the World Trade Center in a ceremony at the station Aug. 29.

"This gift is a tremendous tribute to the many brave and dedicated men and women who responded to the Pentagon..." said Arlington Fire Chief James Schwartz, who served as incident commander of the Pentagon response. "We are honored to receive it on behalf of all the first responders in the region who gave so much that day... and who keep this region safe every day."

The steel, from the North Tower, was escorted from New York City by hundreds of motorcycles and support vehicles. It is a gift from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the New York City Fire Department, Fire Department New York-Fire Family Transport Foundation, and the Iron and Steel Team.

Highway 12 for days or weeks" when it issued ConocoPhillips permits to truck four loads hauling two massive coke drums to its refinery in Billings, the *Missoulian* reported.

► MISSISSIPPI

LAMAR COUNTY may convert a county building into an **inmate work center** that will help ease crowding at the jail and possibly aid the county's budget.

The center would house prisoners for work crews, with the first 20 inmates to be in the new center no later than next spring, the *Clarion Ledger* reported.

"When it's up and running, it should free up about 50 beds and provide the county with free labor," Sheriff Danny Rigel said.

► NORTH CAROLINA

Violent crime is not on the rise in **PENDER COUNTY**, according to *StarNewsonline.com*. In fact, it remained steady.

A glitch in a new state records management software produced faulty statistics that showed an 11.3 percent increase in overall crime from 2008 to 2009. Sheriff Carson Smith told county commissioners the actual figures from the North

Carolina Department of Justice should show correct the error.

► OREGON

Ten counties — including **MULTNOMAH COUNTY**, the state's most populous — are awaiting the outcome of a **lawsuit, filed by Comcast against the state**, which could affect their bottom lines, *The Oregonian* reported.

Comcast paid 2009 taxes on about \$224 million worth of property in the counties, but the state later assessed the cable giant's holdings at more than \$1 billion. The state collected the taxes for counties and distributed the money, which some counties have already spent.

"This could significantly impact cash flow for all affected taxing districts," according to Randy Walruff, Multnomah County's director of assessment, recording and taxation. If Comcast's suit is successful, the counties will have to find a way to repay the money collected and spent for 2009 – 10.

► PENNSYLVANIA

ALLEGHENY COUNTY could earn money for its coffers via

What's in a Seal?



» Calaveras County, Calif.

<http://co.calaveras.ca.us/cc>

Calaveras County was one of the original counties of California, created in 1850 at the time of statehood. Parts of the county's territory were given to Amador County in 1854 and to Alpine County in 1864.

The Spanish word *calaveras* means "skulls." This county takes its name from the Calaveras River, which was reportedly so designated by Spanish explorer Gabriel Moraga when he found, on the banks of the stream, many skulls of Native Americans who had either died of famine or had been killed in tribal conflicts over hunting and fishing grounds.

Calaveras County is not without historical significance. Mark Twain spent many of his writing years there and set his story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," in the county. Its geography features beautiful landmarks, rolling hills and giant valleys. It is also known for its friendly communities, and businesses such as agriculture management and construction engineering. It is filled with caverns, such as Mercer Caverns, which attract tourists from around the country.

The seal represents the beautiful scenery of 663,000 acres of sequoia trees, caverns and recreational activities on the water.

(If you would like your county's seal featured, please contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.)

Research News

Are County Parks on the Chopping Block?

Just when there is increased interest in using local parks as an inexpensive form of recreation, governments are cutting back park services as a way to address their recession-driven budget shortfalls.

A recent survey by the National Recreation and Park Association shows that more than 60 percent of county park systems have reduced their part-time and seasonal staff, while 43 percent have cut full-time positions. Staff reductions came on the heels of budget cuts reported by nearly 60 percent of counties

responding to the survey. Reductions ranged from 3 percent to 18 percent.

The picture gets bleaker on the ground.

Butler County, Ohio closed four parks earlier this year and has placed a proposed property tax levy on the ballot to fund parks for the next six years. If the levy passes, the new funding would help re-open closed parks and add new equipment to existing parks. Across the country, Kitsap County, Wash. is looking at a full or partial closure of parks for the next fiscal year similar to the intermit-

tent closures it made this year at two lakes. It is one of several proposed strategies for cutting \$230,000 to \$305,000 from next year's parks and recreation budget.

Rye Playland in Westchester County, N.Y. — the only county-owned amusement park in the nation — has come under increasing scrutiny by Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, who is looking for ways to better use the public parkland. Astorino claims that Playland hasn't earned a profit in at least a generation. The park costs

between \$3 million to \$6 million a year to operate. Astorino says it makes more fiscal sense to shut it down.

Another specialized use of parkland is also facing the chopping block. Pierce County, Wash.'s only public skating rink is on the brink of closing. Pierce County's Park and Recreation Director Kathy Kravit-Smith said that a funding crunch has resulted in reduced services for all of the county's dozens of parks. She says a previous vote to raise sales tax failed to result in a major renovation for the ice rink, which is in serious need of repair.

And in perhaps one of the most publicized efforts to cope with a reduced parks and recreation budget, Montgomery County, Md.'s potty problem made all the local media outlets in the Washington, D.C. area recently. The issue came to light last month after parks chief Mary Bradford pointed out that the approximately \$150,000 line item for portable toilet rentals in

her agency's budget had been cut as part of \$13 million in reductions from the agency's \$82 million budget request. Bradford said she had made all the cuts she could before she made the decision to try to get others to "adopt" the port-a-potties or do away with them. Public response to this proposal was so great that the potties remain, at least for now.

For additional information about the NRPA survey, go to www.nrpa.org and type in "Economic Update Survey Report Spring 2010" in the search box.

The report was released on June 28 and provided insight into some of the issues and conditions parks are facing. The survey data is divided by type of park and has a section on the survey results from county parks. In total, 911 responses were received from all states except Rhode Island. One hundred thirty eight counties in 33 states participated in the survey.

(Research News was written by Jacqueline Byers, director of research.)

County faces own 'mosque' debate

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

its participation in the PJM Interconnection's **Demand Response Program**. The PJM Interconnection is a regional transmission organization. The reward program is designed to aid in the reliability of the regional electricity grid.

Through the program, successful participants will receive payments for voluntarily reducing their electricity usage when heavy demand threatens the PJM electricity grid and brownouts or blackouts are imminent.

PJM coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in all or parts of Delaware, Illinois,

Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

► TENNESSEE

Several residents recently called on **RUTHERFORD COUNTY** commissioners to **block the construction of an Islamic center** in Murfreesboro. It was approved by the Regional Planning Commission earlier this year under a new state law that allows religious institutions to build in residential neighborhoods as a "use of right."

Opponents expressed concerns

that an Islamic center would promote the spread of Sharia law. Sharia governs several aspects of Muslim life and influences the legal code in a majority of Muslim countries.

► VIRGINIA

• Microsoft has chosen **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** as home for **\$499 million state-of-the-art data center**.

"We believe this selection by Microsoft will give our county the recognition it deserves in attracting future companies that deal in technology," said Glenn Barbour, chairman of the county's Board of Supervisors.

The project will create 50 new jobs. Virginia successfully competed against North Carolina and Texas to secure the facility.

• **PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY**'s Board of Supervisors has approved **charging fees for ambulance runs**.

The fees, to be reviewed annually, will be \$400 for basic life support and \$500 to \$700 for advanced life support services, *The Washington Post* reported. An additional \$10 per mile of transport will also be added.

However, the fees won't be charged to individuals. The county will bill Medicaid, Medicare and insurance companies. Fees for the uninsured will be waived.

The county expects to bring in \$3.1 million in the first year and \$18 million over the next five years.

(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please e-mail ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

Job Market / Classifieds

► TRUST ACCOUNTING SUPERVISOR (IRC19324) – DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

Salary: DOQ.

Dallas County is currently recruiting for a Trust Accounting Supervisor. The successful incumbent will be responsible for the daily maintenance, auditing, and reconciliation of all special fund accounts for the County Clerk's operations as well as conduct monthly bank reconciliations for special trust funds related to civil and probate cases.

Requirements include a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Accounting or in a job related field of study. Two (2) years of direct work related experience in accounts payable or reconciliation. Skilled in the use of standard software applications, for example, Oracle, Microsoft Excel, Word, Access, and Outlook. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate, both

verbally and in writing, and establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, departments and the general public. Must possess excellent financial and analytical skills, with extensive knowledge of all applicable laws, policies and procedures for the specialized area assigned.

To apply visit www.dallascounty.org and complete the online application. Starting salary is based on education and experience. EOE.

► DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION – FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.

Salary: \$100,844 – \$168,075; DOQ.

Fairfax County, Va. Government Department of Transportation seeks experienced, outstanding candidates for a career opportunity as its next Director of Transportation. View full description and apply online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs by Sept. 10. EEO/Reasonable Accommodation. TTY 703.222.7314.

Job Market/Classifieds Rate Schedule

- **Line Rates:** \$7 per line, NACo member counties; \$10 per line, others.
- **Display Classified:** \$50 per column inch, NACo member counties; \$70 per column inch, others.
- **Billing:** Invoices will be sent after publication.
- **Mail advertising copy to:** Job Market, County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.
- **FAX advertising copy to:** Job Market, County News, 202.393.2630.
- **E-mail advertising copy to:** edassist@naco.org.
- **Be sure to include billing information along with copy.**
- **Estimates given prior to publication are approximations only and do not necessarily reflect final cost.**

For more information, contact the Job Market representative at 202.942.4256.

NACo on the Move



Photo by Donald Murray

Larry White, president of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama and Escambia County commissioner, presents a thank-you gift to NACo President Glen Whitley (r), who keynoted ACCA's Annual Convention which was held Aug. 24–26 in Baldwin County, Ala.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Welcome to the World, Evie!

Very recently, the world got a little brighter, a little more peaceful and more hopeful. All of these wonders can be traced to the birth of the beautiful little Evie—the HR Doctor's first grandchild.

Plans had been made for a baby shower, complete with people traveling to western North Carolina, arrangements made for a catered restaurant lunch, an array of pregnant lady games prepared and gifts purchased. Unfortunately, nobody discussed these plans with Evie. On the appointed day, instead of a baby shower, there arrived a baby—about six weeks premature.

Tiny little Evie, within a week, met all of the medical mandates of the modern, highly efficient

and caring staff in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit staff at Mission Hospital in Asheville. She is now home teaching her parents more about life, patience and wonder than even the wonderful doctor daughter Rachel learned in treating mothers-in-waiting, babies and little children, not to mention expectant dads and grandparents.

Certainly for new daddy and HR Son-in-Law, Toby, and Rachel, all of their planning, all of their hopes, all of their anticipation are being realized. Also being realized are the unexpected, the surprises, moments of awe, and a great deal of clean-up.

For many years, the HR Doctor has been advised by friends how wonderful it is to be a grandparent,

New responsibilities in your career often bring new surprises ...

because you can play with the kids, bond with them and then send them back to their parents before warranties expire for the day's activities.

When I first got to hold Evie, we had a quiet chat, exchanged smiles, promised each other that we would bond well and continue to learn and grow from each other. I promised I would do everything I could to enable her skills, experiences in

the world, spirit of exploration and adventure, and sense of caring and generosity. Her bright eyes also reflected the amazing event of emergence into a busy, sometimes loud, bright and scary world. However, it is also a world of caring parents, relatives and friends who will reduce the fright and increase the joy.

Rachel reports that no matter how many patients you treat, no matter how skillful you are as a physician seeing expectant parents, babies and children, the awesome moment of the birth of your own child cannot be eclipsed by any of those other wonderful moments.

While the words in this article

represent the joy of a new grandpa, rereading this article in terms of newly hired or promoted people at work may also make you smile. New responsibilities in your career often bring new surprises, an almost continuous need to clean things up, and the need for strong and ongoing support from others.

Welcome to the world, Evie. Go well into your new life. Grammie Charlotte, Aunt Elyse and I can't wait to continue to be part of the adventure.



Phil Rosenberg

The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

Financial Services News

Alliance Yields Three Decades of Service to Counties

For 30 years, county leaders have enjoyed the benefits of a special relationship between Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) and NACo.

"It's a relationship that has delivered quality supplemental retirement planning services to county employees," said Louie Watson, vice president of NRS sales relationships.

"Nationwide is proud of the work we've done over the years to help thousands of county workers prepare for and live in retirement. Our services include more than providing a 457(b) plan," Watson said. "Through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, Nationwide has concentrated on providing county employees with investing and retirement-planning education in ways that empower them to act in their long-term interest."

Preparing for Tomorrow More Important than Ever

Today, Nationwide is enhancing its support for county leaders to help them promote deferred compensation as an important benefit their employees should take advantage of.

"As we've seen over the past couple years, it's more important than ever for workers to prepare for their long-term needs by saving and investing on their own," Watson noted. "Working with NACo, Nationwide educates employees



Photo by Judy Rolfe

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) and NACo celebrated 30 years of partnership during the recent Annual Conference in Reno, Nev. Pictured here are (from left): Cain A. Hayes, senior vice president, NRS; NACo's then President-elect Glen Whitley; and Louie Watson, vice president strategic partnerships, NRS.

of potential concerns about being prepared for retirement and how participation in the county's deferred compensation plan may help alleviate those concerns."

Watson points out Nationwide Retirement specialists are available to help county leaders promote their deferred compensation plan through onsite events tied to benefits fairs or programs such as National Save for Retirement Week, as well as through

group meetings and one-on-one sessions.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, contact Lisa Cole, lcole@naco.org or 202.942.4270; or contact Louie Watson, WatsonL2@Nationwide.com or 614.854.8895.

(Financial Services News was written by Lisa Cole, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

Tell America ...

COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS



Join county officials and employees from across the country who are participating in NACo's **County Government Works** campaign. Do your part to inform and educate the public about the county government role in the federal system and the hundreds of programs and services delivered daily that touch their lives.

Visit NACo's website at www.naco.org. Click on "About Counties" and then go to "Tell the Public What You Do" to find resources to assist you, such as talking points to address local groups and organizations, sample brochures to educate the public, proven programs to raise understanding of various county agencies, successful public awareness programs implemented by state associations of counties, and much more. Get started today, telling America – **County Government Works**.

